

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 14740 01 OF 03 021837Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 CPR-01 SY-05
USSS-00 A-01 OPR-02 SP-02 DIWY-01 USIE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00
DODE-00 EB-08 AF-10 IO-13 H-01 /081 W
-----059917 021909Z /46
O 021814Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7961

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 14740

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (THATCHER, MARGARET)
SUBJECT: MARGARET THATCHER

REF: (A) LONDON 13788 (B) LONDON 14443

SUMMARY: MRS. THATCHER TRAVELS TO US NEXT WEEK AS LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, HER MAJESTY'S LOYAL OPPOSITION, AT A CRITICAL TIME FOR THE PARTY AND FOR HERSELF AS SHE AND THE PARTY EDGE TOWARD THE CHANCES AN ELECTION POSES. WHILE THE PARTY EXPECTS TO BE RETURNED TO POWER IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, THERE ALSO IS GENERAL CONCERN AMONG THE LEADERSHIP ABOUT BOTH THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEMS IT WILL INHERIT FROM THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IF IT WINS, AS WELL AS THE FEAR THAT IT COULD ITSELF EMERGE WITH AN INSECURE PARLIAMENTARY POWER BASE. AND A FEW CONSERVATIVES ARE BEGINNING EVEN TO THINK THAT THEY MIGHT NOT WIN THE NEXT ELECTION.

MRS. THATCHER'S PERSONAL POSITION IS DIFFICULT. SHE HAS TO CREATE AT THE SAME TIME THE IMAGE OF A POTENTIAL PRIME MINISTER, SECURE IN HER PROSPECTS FOR ELECTORAL VICTORY, WHILE DEMONSTRATING FULL AWARENESS OF THE TOUGH POLITICAL FACTS OF LIFE. SHE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SEEN EITHER AS NAIVELY SELF-CONFIDENT OR UNSURE OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 14740 01 OF 03 021837Z

HERSELF IN ANY WAY. SHE HAS TO COMMAND THE DAILY LOYALTY OF THE PARTY MECHANISM, KEEP IT AT READINESS PITCH AND, AT THE SAME TIME, PREPARE FOR A POSSIBLE LONG SLOG IN OFFICE.

MRS. THATCHER APPEARS TO BE BEARING THESE BURDENS WITH REMARKABLE CALM AND ACUITY. SHE TRAVELS TO THE STATES IN FULL COMMAND OF THE PARTY AND ITS PARLIAMEN-

TARY REPRESENTATIVES, HAVING MADE HER OWN IMPRINT ON THE PARTY AND ITS POLICIES.

WITH THE CONSERVATIVES IN OPPOSITION TO A GOVERNMENT LESS TO THE LEFT THAN LABOR GOVERNMENTS GENERALLY ARE, SHE ALSO HAS MOVED THE PARTY TO THE RIGHT OF THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT OF TED HEATH. THE MOVE HAS BROUGHT GAINS TO THE PARTY IN BY-ELECTIONS AND LAST SPRING'S LOCAL ELECTIONS. WHETHER THE MOVE HAS BEEN FUNDAMENTAL ENOUGH TO COLOR A PROSPECTIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT, FACED WITH THE MASSIVE PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY, HOWEVER, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. WHAT IS CERTAIN, AS FAR AS MARGARET THATCHER IS CONCERNED, IS THAT SHE PROBABLY HAS ONLY ONE CHANCE TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER; THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT SHARP KNIVES WILL BE PULLED OUT IF THE PARTY DOES NOT WIN THE NEXT ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ON BOTH SIDES, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT VISIT. THE US WILL BE SEEING A POSSIBLE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, HOPEFULLY WITH ENOUGH TIME FOR A FULL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. MRS. THATCHER WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF MAKING HER OWN ASSESSMENT OF THE PERSONALITIES AND POLICIES OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. SHE WILL FURTHERMORE BE ABLE PERHAPS TO REASSESS HER REPORTED OPINION THAT A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT AND A CONGRESS CONTROLLED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ARE, AS A MATTER OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 14740 01 OF 03 021837Z

COURSE, PREDISPOSED IN FAVOR OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT OVER A CONSERVATIVE ONE. SHE WILL BE SEEKING TO IMPRESS THOSE SHE MEETS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC THROUGH THE MEDIA WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF HER PRESENT AND COMING ROLE IN BRITISH POLITICS. SHE DOES NOT WANT TO BE SEEN AS A PHENOMENON: THE POLITICALLY ACTIVE WOMAN WHO HAS SOMEHOW MANAGED BY LUCK AND BY PLUCK TO MAKE HER WAY TO THE TOP IN POLITICS TRADITIONALLY SO MALE-DOMINATED IN BRITAIN. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE PARTIAL TRUTH OF THAT VIEW, SHE FEELS SHE IS NOW CONSIDERABLY BEYOND IT.

2. THE MARGARET THATCHER TRAVELING TO THE STATES NEXT WEEK FOR A ROUND OF HIGH-LEVEL CALLS, SPEECHES, BRIEFINGS, PRESS CONFERENCES AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS IS A DIFFERENT MARGARET THATCHER FROM THE 1975 VISITOR. SHE NOW IS UNQUESTIONED LEADER OF THE PARTY, FULL OF VITALITY, SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND OPTIMISM. THE BATTLE SCARS DON'T SHOW, BUT THERE IS A QUANTUM DIFFERENCE IN HER POLITICAL ABILITY, UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS, AND SKILLS AND JUDGMENT.

3. MRS. THATCHER BECAME LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 14740 02 OF 03 021837Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 CPR-01 SY-05
USSS-00 A-01 OPR-02 SP-02 DIWY-01 USIE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00
DODE-00 EB-08 AF-10 IO-13 H-01 /081 W
-----059927 021910Z /46

O 021814Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7962

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 LONDON 14740

PARTY THROUGH A COMBINATION OF FACTORS: THE CONSERVATIVE
DEFEATS IN THE TWO 1974 ELECTIONS, DISENCHANTMENT WITH
TED HEATH, THE CUMBERSOME PROCEDURES FOR ELECTING THE
PARTY LEADER, AND HER OWN DETERMINATION TO OFFER HERSELF
AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PREVIOUS LEADER. SHE
SHOWED AN INSTINCT FOR SELECTING THE BEST POSSIBLE CAM-
PAIGN ASSISTANTS (MOST OF WHOM ARE STILL WORKING WITH
HER) AND FOR CORRECT ASSESSMENT OF HER POSSIBILITIES AND
HER STRATEGIES. WITHOUT THE WIDE EXPERIENCE IN CABINET
POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY DEEMED ESSENTIAL FOR OPPOSITION
LEADERS AND PUTATIVE PRIME MINISTERS, SHE WON THE LEADER-
SHIP STAKES.

4. HER PERIOD OF LEADERSHIP TO DATE HAS BEEN MARKED BY
PERSONAL AS WELL AS PARTY SUCCESS. SHE HAS GAINED MUCH
EXPERIENCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PARTY INSIDE AND
OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT. SHE HAS EXPERIMENTED WITH THE PER-
SONNEL OF HER SHADOW CABINET AND HAS, ACCORDING TO RE-
PORTS, BECOME MUCH MORE INCISIVE IN CHAIRING SESSIONS
OF THE SHADOW CABINET. UNDER HER DIRECTION, THE PARTY
HAS PRODUCED A "MINI-MANIFESTO" (THE RIGHT APPROACH),
AN INTERIM GUIDE TO PARTY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES. SHE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 14740 02 OF 03 021837Z

HAS TRAVELED WIDELY IN BRITAIN, INDEPENDENTLY AND IN SUPPORT OF CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES, AND ABROAD TO EXPAND HER EXPERTISE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MEET HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LEADERS, AND TO ESTABLISH HERSELF ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AS THE LEADING CONTENDER TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE UK.

5. ALL OF THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT HER LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF TOTAL SUCCESS OR THAT HER SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMING. HER STATURE HAS GROWN, HER EXPERIENCE IS BROADER AND DEEPER, SHE IS UNDENIABLY A STRONGER CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER THAN SHE WAS TWO YEARS AGO. SHE HAS WON POINTS IN SOME OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SCRAPES, SHE HAS LOST SOME. SO FAR, SHE SEEMS NOT TO HAVE LOST ANY OF THE MOMENTUM OF HER LEADERSHIP, BUT SHE HAS NOT AS YET CAPTURED THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE FOR HERSELF OR FOR HER PARTY. SHE ALSO HAS YET TO ATTRACT MASSIVE SUPPORT OUTSIDE CONSERVATIVE GROUPS, BUT IN ADDITION TO PARTY LOYALISTS SHE IS COUNTING ON BRITISH VOTERS TO SUPPORT HER AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CALLAGHAN.

6. AS SHE HERSELF SAYS, SHE CAN'T BEAT ARITHMETIC. THE LABOR PARTY CONTINUES TO GOVERN AS A MINORITY PARTY, THANKS TO THE LIB-LAB PACT AND THE GOVERNMENT'S TENDERS TO THE SCOT NATS AND THE ULSTER MPS. SO LONG AS THESE ARRANGEMENTS HOLD, THE CONSERVATIVES CANNOT FORCE A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE AND THE TIMING OF A GENERAL ELECTION REMAINS IN THE HANDS OF THE PRIME MINISTER. WHEN AND IF HE CALLS AN ELECTION, MRS. THATCHER KNOWS THE TIMING WILL BE TO HIS ADVANTAGE AND NOT HERS; IF LEFT TO CALLAGHAN'S CHOOSING, THE TIMING CAN BE EXPECTED LATER RATHER THAN SOONER (THIS PARLIAMENT HAS A LIFE EXPECTATION OF 10 YEARS).

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 14740 02 OF 03 021837Z

TANCY UNTIL OCTOBER 1979) AND AT A TIME WHEN THE PROSPECTS FOR THE ECONOMY APPEAR MORE FAVORABLE THAN AT PRESENT.

7. WHAT IS LEFT THEN FOR MRS. THATCHER IN THE MEANTIME? WE BELIEVE SHE SEES SHE MUST CONTINUE TO PROBE AND EXPLORE POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT WEAKNESSES; SHE MUST UTILIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PROVOKE THE GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOP A CONFRONTATIONAL SITUATION, HOPING THAT A MIS-STEP MAY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 14740 03 OF 03 021838Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 CPR-01 SY-05
USSS-00 DIWY-01 SSO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SP-02 USIE-00
PRS-01 PA-01 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
DODE-00 EB-08 AF-10 IO-13 H-01 /081 W
-----060089 021911Z /46

O 021814Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7963

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 LONDON 14740

LEAD THE GOVERNMENT TO A SHOWDOWN; SHE HAS TO CALL FOR MORE LAW AND ORDER AND SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE; SHE HAS TO PUT FORWARD HER VIEWS ON LABOR DISPUTES, STRIKES, SLOWDOWNS; SHE HAS TO DECRY VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS, THE CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL FRONT AND THE EXTREME LEFT; SHE HAS TO QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF ITS SUCCESS; SHE HAS TO STRESS THE GOVERNMENT'S INATTENTION TO GROWING SOVIET MIGHT AND THE NEED FOR GREATER UK DEFENSE EXPENDITURE; SHE HAS TO CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE THEIR OWN VIEWS AND POLICIES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME AVOIDING PRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT WITH A CONVENIENT TARGET TO ATTACK. SHE HAS TO MAKE SURE A LOW CONSERVATIVE PROFILE ON POLICIES LIKE CONTROL OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURES, COUNTER-INFLATIONARY MOVES, ETC., DOES NOT BECOME A "NON-CONSERVATIVE" PROFILE.

8. MRS. THATCHER SEEMS TO HAVE FEW ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE HARD WORLD OF POLITICS AND NATURALLY WANTS TO BE SEEN AT HOME AND ABROAD AS A FIGURE OF POLITICAL IMPORTANCE IN HER OWN RIGHT./ SHE IS GRATIFIED HER STATUS HAS BEEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 14740 03 OF 03 021838Z

RECOGNIZED INITIALLY BY EVEN A SHORT MEETING WITH THE
PRESIDENT IN LONDON AND BY A WHITE HOUSE INVITATION.
SHE IS PLEASED BY THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE HERSELF KNOWN
TO HIGH-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION (REF B).
SHE WANTS BOTH TO BE KNOWN BY US CABINET MEMBERS AND TO
FORM HER OWN IMPRESSIONS OF THEM.

BREWSTER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON14740
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770319-0047
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197709103/aaaadiyd.tel
Line Count: 286
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7d5b8739-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LONDON 13788, 77 LONDON 14443
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1072058
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARGARET THATCHER
TAGS: OVIP, (THATCHER, MARGARET)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7d5b8739-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009